

Lagan Valley Regional Park Five Year Management Plan 2023-2028



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GROWTHGROUP**
Enabling business growth



Pic: View Down the River Lagan from Union Locks



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Executive Summary



Pic: Shaw's Bridge

Executive Summary

Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) characterised by its diverse landscape and broad visitor base, benefits from management by multiple stakeholders. This document outlines the 2023-2028 Five-Year Management Plan, aligning with the principles outlined in the LVRP Ten Year Strategic Vision. The Vision centres on six key themes:

- Biodiversity
- Visitors
- Community
- Landscape
- Heritage
- Health & Recreation.

The Management Plan thoughtfully incorporates the primary goals and objectives of the Northern Ireland Assembly and its various departments and key stakeholders within the Regional Park. It considers the community plans of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) and Belfast City Council (BCC). Considering the Regional Park's strong emphasis on environment and heritage it also pays special attention to the legislative and policy mandates at regional and local levels of government.

Developed through collaboration with representatives from core stakeholder groups and public consultation, the Management Plan contextualises major focus areas within the strategic policies of relevant governing bodies and previous management plans. It encompasses issues regarding the Regional Park's management, its organisational sustainability, and ongoing partnership support for preserving this unique area.

The document culminates in a comprehensive action plan that outlines specific objectives, targets, and expected outcomes. Numerous projects receive emphasis, accompanied by practical suggestions for potential funding avenues, considering today's economically constrained environment. Designed to be a pragmatic working resource, the document serves to ensure the tangible implementation and subsequent evaluation of the Regional Park's objectives in real-world scenarios.

From enriching visitor experiences to conserving natural habitats and fostering community engagement, this Management Plan charts towards a sustainable and vibrant future for Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Introduction



Pic: Giant's Ring

Introduction

The formulation of the 2023-2028 Five-Year Management Plan for LVRP has been achieved through collaborative efforts involving key stakeholders responsible for the oversight and funding of the park.

LVRP attracts a considerable number of visitors who enjoy its landscapes. Moreover, it extends an invaluable avenue for local residents to actively participate in its administration through a dedicated volunteer initiative, established under the prior Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme (Laganscape). Concurrently, the park provides expert day-to-day conservation and visitor management services on behalf of its collaborative partners.

A principal objective of this document is to serve as a roadmap that guarantees the enduring viability of LVRP. With input from public surveys and expert consultations, key areas have been identified where LVRP can flourish.

Development of Action Plan: Methodology & Process

To develop this management plan, Pinnacle Growth Group (PGG) employed a tailored and effective methodology, designed to enable the development of an effective and comprehensive management plan. This was delivered across the following stages:



Figure 1 - Methodology for Development of the Management Plan

To commence project delivery, PGG met with designated contacts at LVRP, and introductions were facilitated. Data and information were exchanged and PGG made an information request to LVRP to enable development of a core understanding to enable the successful development of a management plan.

Stakeholder Mapping

To ensure the management plan is effective and comprehensive, it is critical that the views of the many LVRP stakeholders are considered. Prior to the commencement of stakeholder engagement, PGG conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise, with the aim of identifying all relevant stakeholders for engagement to support the overall development of an effective management plan.

Key stakeholders identified included:

- LVRP Staff
- LVRP Board Members
- LVRP Volunteers
- LVRP Management Committee
- The Public

Additional stakeholders that would be impacted by or could influence the delivery and implementation of this management plan were also identified and contact was made by PGG to ensure their input in the new management plan. LVRP staff, Board members, and volunteers contributed towards the identification of these additional stakeholders.

These additional stakeholders have been separated into two different categories: funding partners and management partners.

- Funding partners are organisations that provide funding for the operation of LVRP or specific projects within it to support achievement of strategic objectives and targets.
- Management partners are organisations that will support LVRP staff manage and maintain the Park and the different wildlife, habitats, landscape, and infrastructure and buildings.

Funding Partners

As stated, through engagement with LVRP's internal stakeholders, existing funding partners were noted. These included:

- The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- Belfast City Council (BCC)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)
- Department for Infrastructure (DfI)
- Department for Communities (DfC)
- National Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

It should be noted that funding partners are also management partners

Management Partners

Through engagement with LVRP's internal stakeholders, existing management partners were noted. These included:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| • The National Trust | • Lagan Rivers Trust |
| • Sustrans | • Forest Service |
| • The Woodland Trust | • Ulster Wildlife |

Key Stakeholder Responsibilities

Site management is the responsibility of the individual landowners, the main ones being the two Councils, Forest Service, National Trust, and DfI Rivers within their respective areas.

Both councils are significant landowners within LVRP which plays an important co-ordinating role in linking the councils and their partners, supporting the management of key sites, including Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park (BCC), Barnett Demesne (BCC), Clement Wilson Park (BCC), Lagan Meadows (BCC), Castle Gardens (LCCC), Derriaghy Glen (LCCC), McIlroy Park (LCCC) and Glenmore Parkland Trail (LCCC). The Lagan Towpath and the remaining canal infrastructure is owned by the Department for Infrastructure, with responsibility to manage and maintain their assets along this corridor, with DfI Rivers managing the river system.

LVRP provides an important supporting role in cleansing and monitoring the towpath as well as acting as an important first point of contact for the public. DAERA is the statutory regulator for Belvoir ASSI. Forest Service owns and manages Belvoir Park Forest and Hydebank Wood with support from LVRP, particularly in community engagement. Other areas are owned or managed by other NGOs, including the National Trust, which owns the Minnowburn property, and the Woodland Trust which owns and manages woodland areas at Old Warren and Belvoir.

The Giant's Ring is a Scheduled Monument in State Care set in an Area of Significant Archaeological Interest. It is one of Northern Ireland's most important historical monuments. The monument is under the guardianship of Department for Communities through HED and LVRP have a supportive role in its management.

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Following project initiation, initial research, and stakeholder mapping, PGG developed a detailed stakeholder engagement strategy that was inclusive of all key stakeholder groups listed above who would be influenced or impacted by the implementation of the new Five-Year Management Plan. With the confirmation of stakeholder groups to be engaged and the appropriate methods, PGG completed extensive stakeholder engagement activities. This involved a range of engagement methods, ranging from surveys to one-to-one meetings and group workshops and generated strong qualitative and quantitative data to support the developed management plan.

Background



Pic: Sweet Peas at Lock
Keeper's Cottage

Background

Spanning across 2,116 hectares, LVRP encompasses areas within BCC and LCCC (Figure 2 - Map of LVRP). As the sole Regional Park in Northern Ireland, it stands as a vital link for biodiversity and recreation, connecting Lisburn and Belfast. The park's distinct attributes are underscored by multiple designations, highlighting a remarkable blend of natural and cultural heritage unique to the region. This rich heritage is set against a backdrop of a historic landscape adorned with an array of parks, farmlands, woodlands, and meadows, bridging the urban hubs of Belfast and Lisburn. Apart from its unparalleled built, archaeological, and industrial history, the park serves as a green and blue corridor, providing exceptional recreational and health advantages for both locals and visitors.

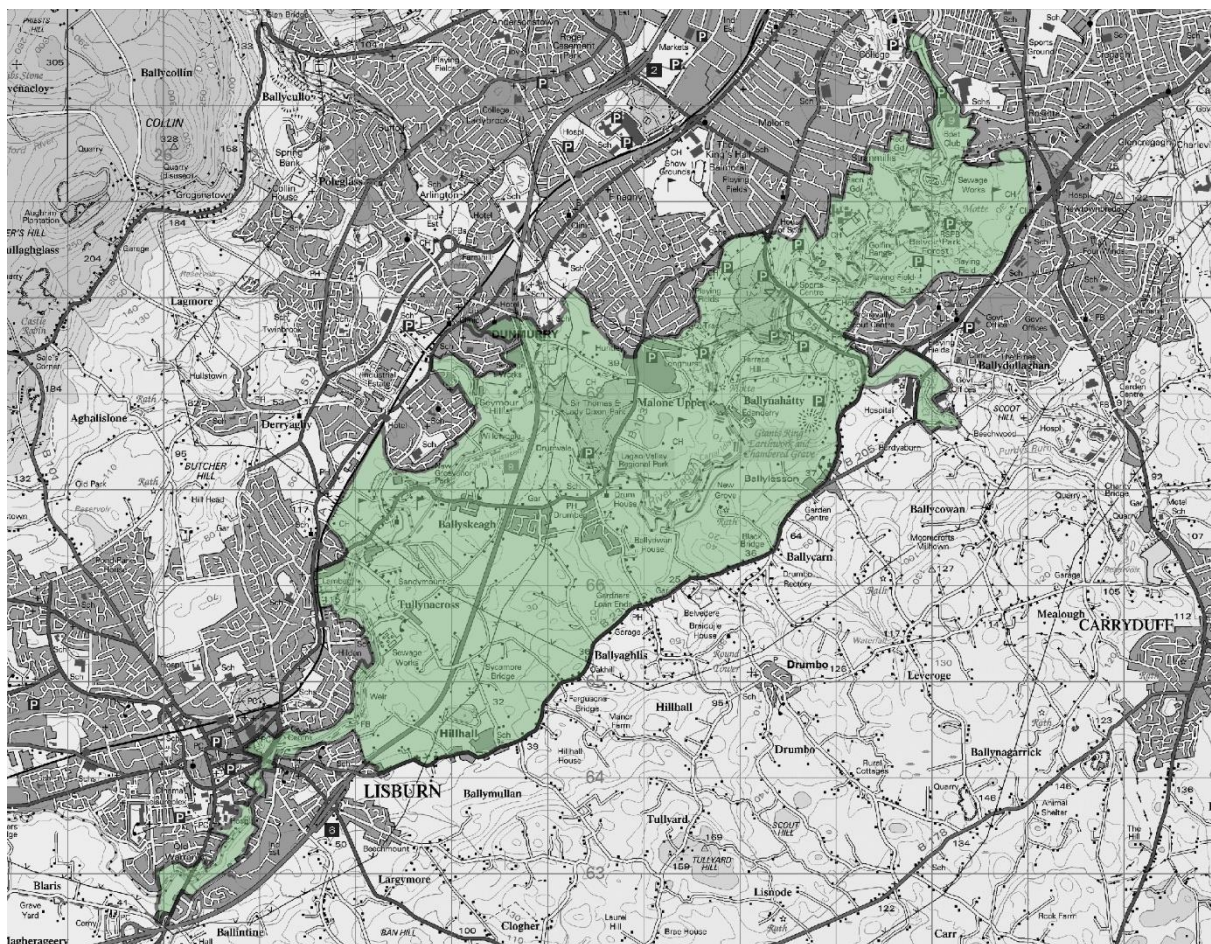


Figure 2 – Map of LVRP

Lagan Valley, where LVRP lies, was granted the status of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) under the Amenity Lands Act (NI) 1965. Established in 1967, LVRP was intended to safeguard the landscape and furnish a recreational space for the nearby urban populace.

As one of Northern Ireland's nine AONBs and forty-nine across the UK, LVRP aligns its objectives with the overarching goals of AONB management on:

- Safeguarding, conserving, and enhancing the Regional Park's environment
- Maintaining the visual allure, quality, and features of the Regional Park's landscape
- Preserving historic structures, cultural heritage, and promoting serene enjoyment for the public's benefit

Furthermore, LVRP takes on additional responsibilities:

- Acting as an advisory entity to the Government and other departments
- Serving as a statutory consultee on planning applications impacting the park

LVRP's initial management plan was crafted in 1996 by the Department of Environment, previously known as the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS), now the NIEA. Adhering to best practices, subsequent five-year management plans have been developed and executed. The core vision, aims, and priority themes of LVRP are laid out as follows:

Vision

- "A thriving, diverse, and valued riverside heritage within a Regional Park that welcomes exploration, learning, and enjoyment, all while ensuring a sustainable environment for everyone."

Our Aims

1. We will proactively conserve and manage the biodiversity in the Regional Park.
2. We will support and facilitate ongoing research and education on the area's biodiversity and heritage.
3. We will encourage involvement of the community and develop volunteering in the Regional Park.
4. We will maintain and enhance the landscape quality of the Regional Park for the benefit of all.
5. We will proactively conserve and manage the cultural and built heritage of the Regional Park.
6. We will promote the benefits of green open spaces, within the area, for health and wellbeing.
7. We will support appropriate recreation activities, events, and the development of sustainable tourism for the benefit of the region.
8. We will increase public awareness of the natural and cultural heritage throughout the region.

Priority Themes

LVRP's key themes are:

- Biodiversity
- Visitors
- Community
- Landscape
- Heritage
- Health & Recreation

Strategic Context



Pic: Beeches at
Minnowburn

Strategic Context

Introduction

To support the development of this management plan, it is critically important that the various strategic contexts that it will compliment are identified. This will provide greater clarity and cognisance to the action plan for implementation, provision of funding options and recommendations and identification of potential projects for delivery throughout the lifetime of the management plan.

National Governments

LVRP's Five Year Management Plan will need to align with national government initiatives from both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Each government has specific, strategic economic policies and alignment with the management of LVRP will ensure opportunities to achieve mutually identified targets and goals are maximised,

UK Government

The UK Government's environmental policy is currently guided by their **25 Year Environment Plan**, which was published in 2018 with the intention of improving the environment, within a generation, and leaving it in a better state than we found it through collaboration between communities, businesses, and government.

Within the Plan, there are targets for achievement that align with the objectives of LVRP. This includes:

- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Enhancing beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment
- Enhancing biosecurity

Within each target, there are a series of specific outcome indicators for progress assessment. Since the launch of the Plan, there has been mixed performance under each target across short- and medium-term impacts. While not all targets apply to Northern Ireland (due to environmental policy being a devolved power to the Northern Assembly), it is important that LVRP aligns with these targets to support overall positive environmental impact.

Irish Government

The Irish Government's environmental policy is guided by the **Climate Action Plan 2021**, which provides a detailed plan for how the Republic of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by 51% by 2030 and the path to reaching zero emissions by no later than 2050. While this is focused on industry and business impacts on emissions, this Plan will be supplemented by the **Fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan**. This plan will cover the period between 2023-2027 and is currently at the consultation stage prior to publication.

Within the draft Action Plan, objectives and outcomes listed align with the strategic priorities of LVRP, including:

Objective	Outcome
Meet Urgent Conservation & Restoration Needs	Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside are conserved
	All freshwater bodies are of at least 'Good Ecological Status'
	Genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded
	Invasive alien species are controlled and managed on an all-island basis
Secure Nature's Contribution to People	Ireland's natural heritage and biocultural diversity is recognised, valued, enhanced and promoted in policy and practice.
	Relationship between biodiversity and health and wellbeing is recognised and valued
Embed Biodiversity at the Heart of Climate Action	Threats to ecosystem services posed by climate change are recognised, addressed and mitigated
	Nature-based solutions that combine benefits for biodiversity and climate change adaption are widely implemented at national, regional and local scale

Table 1 - Objectives & Outcomes from Draft National Biodiversity Action Plan

It is important to note that while there is alignment between these objectives, as a draft consultation plan, these are subject to change. While LVRP will not fall within the jurisdiction of the Irish Government, strategically co-ordinating efforts for biodiversity across Ireland is of critical importance due to the wider share ecosystem and unique biodiversity to the island of Ireland. It is important that once this Action Plan is published, LVRP actively seek to align management activities with it.

NI Government

DAERA

The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) is a funder of LVRP and with an increased focus on climate change and taking positive steps towards decarbonisation, DAERA have sought to develop a concentrated strategy to ensure Northern Ireland contributes effectively to resolving the climate crisis. Currently in draft form, the **Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland** sets out six Strategic Environmental Outcomes that DAERA are seeking to achieve through strategic actions across sustainability, green growth, environmental governance, and the built and historic environment amongst others.

Of the six targeted Strategic Environmental Outcomes, two are closely aligned to LVRP. These are **Healthy & Accessible Environment & Landscapes Everyone Can Connect With & Enjoy** and **Thriving, Resilient & Connected Nature & Wildlife**. These directly align with LVRP's priority themes of biodiversity, community, heritage, landscape, health & recreation and visitors and the various operational aspects of LVRP. Within this Management Plan, actions and projects will be developed in line with the various goals of each of these Strategic Environmental Objectives.

The Water Framework Directive ensures that the legislation relating to water quality continue to operate here after 1 January 2021. Under the management plans set up across Northern Ireland, the Northeastern River Basin District (NE RBD) plan sets out the targets across the catchment areas that the river Lagan falls under. Achieving these targets relies on community and partners undertaking actions that drive improvements in water quality and biodiversity in their catchment areas.

DfI

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) owns the Lagan towpath, canal and most of the associated infrastructure. DfI has defined a set of objectives that represent the aspirations of the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035. Previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), the ETP covers five council areas and will also support the preparation of the Local Development Plans for these councils. Much of the focus of the ETP is directed towards healthy, safe and sustainable transport options that support reduced dependence on a carbon economy.

Until the ETP is finalised both the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) will continue to guide the work of DfI. Both frameworks deliver a significant contribution towards achieving the longer-term transportation vision contained within the RDS.

A revised strategy document, ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation, was published in 2012. This compliments the RDS 2035 and aims to achieve its vision for transportation. One of its main Strategic Objectives is to “improve connectivity within the region” by completing the work identified in the current RSTN TP and Strategic Road Improvement Programme.

DfC

The Giant’s Ring is in the guardianship of The Department for Communities through its Historic Environment Division. The Department for Communities (DfC) has a strategic focus on Building Inclusive Communities. The Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020–2025 outlines how the DfC aims to work across government, its Arm’s Length Bodies, and communities to achieve its common purpose of supporting people, building communities, and shaping places. The strategy sets out the DfC’s commitment to creating an inclusive society that promotes equality, diversity, and social well-being.

Belfast City Council

Falling within the Council’s local authority, BCC is a key funder of LVRP. It is important therefore that this management plan is designed with an awareness of how LVRP can contribute to the successful achievement of mutually identified strategic aims and objectives.

BCC is guided by **The Belfast Agenda**, a commitment to implementing a new vision for Belfast. It aims that by 2035, Belfast will be a city **that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable and where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing**.

These high-level ambitions provide a direction on how LVRP can align their activities and projects with these ambitions. LVRP can contribute significantly to each ambition through providing a safe, welcoming, and clean space for leisure and recreation activities, while also demonstrating environmental sustainability through careful management and investment in its landscapes, habitat and wildlife.

To support achievement of **The Belfast Agenda**, BCC’s **Corporate Plan 2020–2024** outlines tailored objectives and targets to enable achievement of key aims and the overall vision for 2035. A key focus within the Plan is **Resilience and Sustainability**.

BCC is seeking to protect the city and its environment for future generations against climate change, which includes improving air quality and lower carbon travel choices. LVRP contributes significantly to Belfast's air quality and through the Park's eleven miles of riverbank, offers a direct route through key arterial parts of Belfast. LVRP can engage with BCC to ensure that these areas of the **Corporate Plan** are successfully supported through this management plan.

Supporting achievement of **The Belfast Agenda** and the **Corporate Plan** is BCC's **Improvement Plan 2022-2023**. This provides a practical and measurable method to gauge the progress towards achieving those priorities within **The Belfast Agenda**. **Improvement Objective 4 is Our Environment** with a specific focus on the following three areas of Council activity:

- Using our civic leadership role to develop joined-up and longer-term approaches to tackling climate change;
- Introducing local level initiatives to protect our local environment;
- To critically examine how we can reduce waste by re-using or recycling more.

Performance indicators for this **Improvement Objective** include the rollout of the **One Million Trees Programme** and the completion of a **Local Biodiversity Action Plan**. These are both key performance indicators that LVRP can support achievement of through the implementation of this management plan.

BCC has also created the **Belfast Local Development Plan** for the city, serving as a fifteen-year framework to support Belfast's growth. Comprising several strategic policies, specific policies directly align with the activities and operations of LVRP, such as **Improving Health and Wellbeing**, **Environmental Resilience** and **Connectivity**.

Also aligned to the **Belfast Local Development Plan** and strategically important to the **Regional Park** are the **Belfast open spaces Strategy (BOSS)** which sets out a vision, strategic principles, opportunities, and headline action for open spaces in Belfast and the **Belfast green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP)**. The latter falls within BOSS and aims to strategically plan vegetated areas (green infrastructure) and waterways (blue infrastructure) to maximise economic, social, and environmental health benefits in and around the urban areas of Belfast.

Many LVRP users strongly associate the Park with **Improving Health and Wellbeing**, directly linking to one of the Park's priority themes. The **Belfast Local Development Plan** is prioritising the provision of good quality green open space linked to a green and blue infrastructure network, to help to improve air quality and provide respite beneficial for enhancing mental health. **Environmental Resilience** addresses the focus on positive climate impacts.

Critically, trees are designated as an important carbon store, with a need to be protected and enhanced as they can help to absorb greenhouse gasses. Through Connectivity, the Council are promoting sustainable transports to and within the city, including public transport, walking and cycling.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

LVRP also falls within the jurisdiction of LCCC, who alongside BCC, serve as a core funder for LVRP. It is therefore highly important that this management plan is informed by the strategic focuses of LCCC.

LCCC is currently guided by their **Interim Corporate Plan 2021-2024**, which was developed in response to the disruptive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the previous Corporate Plan 2018-2022. Of the Interim Corporate Plan's five Strategic Themes, the fourth, **Where We Live**, is most aligned to this management plan and LVRP. With a targeted strategic outcome to **live in resilient and environmentally friendly places**, several success measures have been outlined. This includes:

- Number of people visiting our parks and open spaces
- Evidence of the benefits of environmental improvements

These success measures directly align with the aims and ambitions of LVRP, and it is important that there is alignment between the **Interim Corporate Plan 2021-2024** and this management plan.

A significant policy within LCCC is the **Local Biodiversity Action Plan**. A priority theme of LVRP is biodiversity and with LVRP recognised as a **Partner of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan**, with LVRP assigned to specific actions for identified habitats and species. To ensure a holistic approach, this management plan will be considerate of the responsibilities assigned to LVRP within the **Local Biodiversity Action Plan**.

Complimenting the Local Biodiversity Action Plan is LCCC's **Open Spaces (Green) Strategy**, which was developed to demonstrate the Council's commitment to creating a healthy, active, and accessible environment, connecting places and people, where biodiversity, conservation and adapting to climate change are key.

The **Open Spaces (Green) Strategy** is guided by six strategic principles to achieve their vision, with multiple directly aligning with the priorities of LVRP, this includes:

- Protect and enhance open space recognising its value in promoting health and well-being and social benefits to communities
- Support and encourage access to high quality open space close to where people live that meets the needs of different ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- Safeguard key tourism, heritage, and recreation assets, reinforcing local identity and civic pride.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment, helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change and reduce and prevent biodiversity loss.
- Promote opportunities for sustainable travel through greater connectivity of open spaces.

Against each of these strategic principles a series of recommendations and actions have been outlined for delivery between 2022-2026 to deliver the Open Spaces (Green) Strategy. Many of these recommendations and actions directly impact LVRP, with clear identifiable opportunities for collaborative delivery between LCCC and LVRP. These will be considered for the development of this management plan.

Conclusion

Within the strategic focuses of each of the policies and strategies identified, there are clear overlaps and direct links to the core priorities and focuses of LVRP. In some instances, LVRP is a designated or associated delivery partner of key stakeholder's strategic plans. Each of these areas will be directly addressed within the development of this management plan, ultimately ensuring that the implementation of this management plan will enable the successful, mutual achievement of strategic objectives, aims and targets.

Priority Themes



Pic: View Across Lagan Valley to Malone House

Priority Themes

To guide the delivery and implementation of this management plan, six priority themes have been identified. These themes address the critical aspects of LVRP operations and characteristics, ensuring the management plan can support overall successful Park management.

Each theme has relevant objectives assigned to delivery partners to ensure that each priority theme is fully addressed as part of management plan delivery and implementation.

All six priority themes are defined below, with specific context on their relativity to LVRP also provided.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity addresses the various and diverse wildlife, habitats and environmental conditions spread across LVRP. To ensure that these are effectively and successfully maintained, a range of specific, scientific and specialist management techniques, approaches and methods are required. These are applied to eight key areas:

- Parkland
- Wetland
- River
- River Quality
- Woodland
- Hedgerow
- Veteran Trees
- Grassland

This management plan will list objectives and projects that will protect and develop the Park's biodiversity, enhancing the potential for biodiversity to flourish.

Visitors

Visitors addresses the many people who visit and use LVRP. As of Year End 2022, total visitor numbers reached 1.81 million (Figure 3), still considerably higher than pre-pandemic visitor numbers. Visitors utilise the Park for various reasons, such as leisure and recreation and commuting and for connectivity. This management plan will support delivery of objectives and projects that will improve visitors' experiences and their satisfaction with the Park.

Community

Community addresses the many communities that neighbour and are situated close to the Park's boundaries. As the LVRP catchment area is spread across BCC and LCCC, it includes a range of deprived and affluent neighbourhoods and communities. The management plan will support the development of strong community relationships and engagement between community stakeholders.

Landscape

Landscape addresses the unique characteristics of LVRP, how they are protected and maintained and how various threats to the Park's landscape and environment are measured. This management plan will provide objectives and targets that will support the changing management of the landscape, address visitor management and enable overall protection of the Park's landscape.

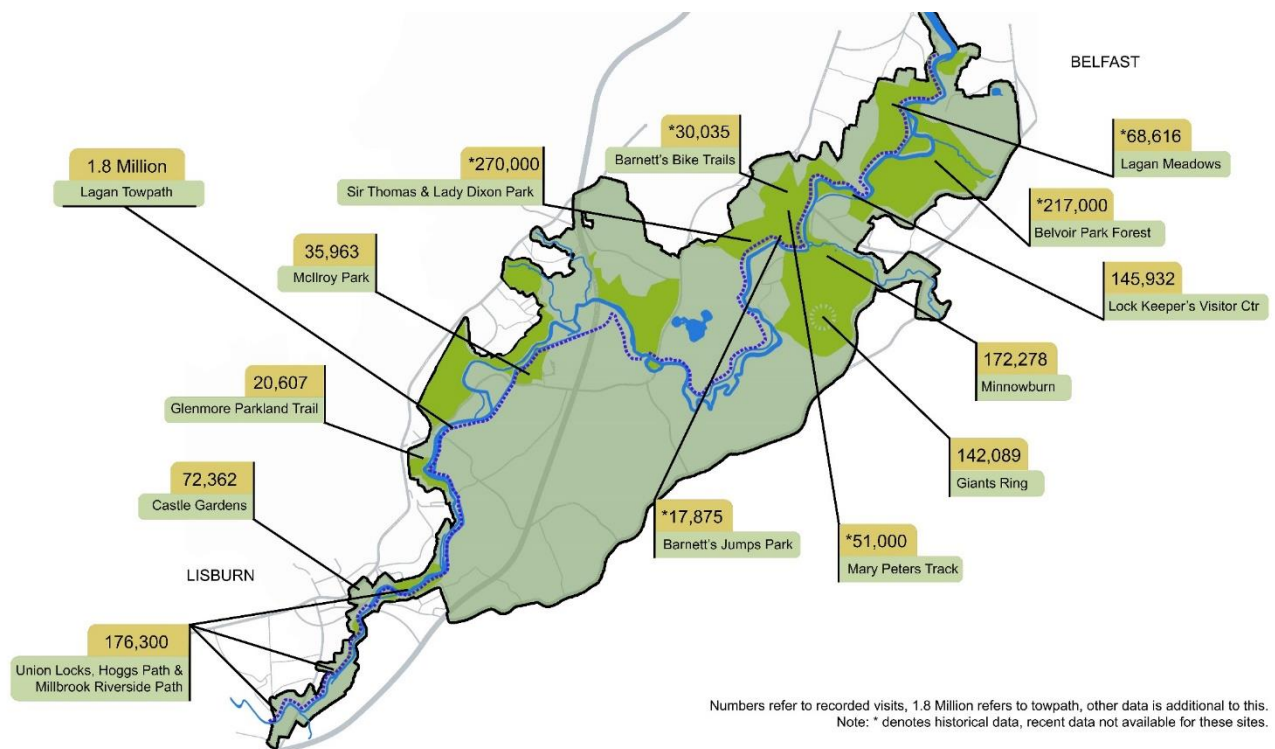
Heritage

Heritage addresses the various archaeological sites and monuments across LVRP. Each of these sites requires careful and considerate management to ensure that they are accessible for visitors and can be further investigated and researched to develop new findings. This management plan will develop objectives to support the protection and further development of existing heritage sites.

Health & Recreation

Health and Recreation addresses the many opportunities for Park visitors to exercise and realise opportunities for positive health and recreation choices. Objectives and targets developed to support achievement of this priority theme will have consideration for those of relevant stakeholders within LVRP to ensure maximum physical and mental health benefits to its users.

Figure 3 – Visitor numbers across LVRP



Action Plan



Pic: Heron on Old Bridge
at Lock 3

Action Plan

To support the implementation of this management plan, an Action Plan over the five-year period 2023-2028 has been developed. The Action Plan is aligned with the Regional Park's annual budget that supports the operational functions of LVRP staff. Annual tasks are those are undertaken yearly, whereas routine tasks occur at scheduled intervals though not on an annual basis. It consists of multiple objectives addressing each of the priority themes and accompanying strategic aims identified to be achieved throughout the duration of this management plan.

Objectives were developed through engagement with LVRP's various stakeholders, including Park staff, volunteers, management committee, board of directors and partner organisations. Where possible objectives are aligned with the delivery of the strategic targets of partners and broader national strategic objectives. To ensure their successful completion, all objectives developed and listed in the Action Plan below include SMART targets, delivery timescales, measurable outputs, assigned delivery bodies and lead partners and the estimated cost of completion.

Identified Priority Themes & Accompanying Strategic Aim

Theme: Biodiversity

Strategic Aim: To proactively manage, protect and improve the biodiversity in the Regional Park

Theme: Visitors

Strategic Aim: To manage and monitor visitors to the Regional Park, to deliver and support events and sustainable tourism

Theme: Community

Strategic Aim: To encourage involvement of the community and to develop volunteering in the Regional Park.

Theme: Landscape

Strategic Aim: To proactively protect and celebrate the character of the Regional Park and AONB Landscape

Theme: Heritage

Strategic Aim: To protect and celebrate the rich historic and cultural legacy of the Regional Park

Theme: Health and Recreation

Strategic Aim: To promote the benefits of green open spaces, within the area, for health and wellbeing and to support appropriate recreational activities.

Theme: Biodiversity Strategic Aim: To proactively manage, protect and improve the biodiversity in the Regional Park						
Annual Tasks						
Objective	Targets	Outcomes	Timescale	Lead Partner in BOLD	Costs	
1.1 Species-rich grasslands are well maintained.	All sites within the Regional Park to be cut and lifted in late summer/autumn. Main sites are Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park (STLD), Barnett Demesne, Clement Wilson Park, Lagan Lands East, Minnowburn, McIlroy Park, Glenmore Parkland Trail, Jubilee Park, and Lock Keeper's Cottage.	Species-rich grasslands will be maintained to a high standard.	Annual maintenance 2023-2028.	LVRP, BCC, LCCC, National Trust	Staff time Volunteer time	
1.2 Maintain meadow lands.	Continue grazing regimes as per lease agreements. Main sites are Lagan Meadows and Moreland's Meadow.	Traditional meadow landscapes will be preserved.	Annual seasonal grazing regimes.	BCC	As per BCC lease agreements	

1.3 Maintain areas of wetland habitat.	Continued maintenance of wetland sites through removal of scrub and self-seeded trees Main sites are seasonal wetland at STLD and Morelands meadow and Lester's Dam in Lagan Meadows.	Wetland areas will be retained and protected from natural succession.	Annual scrub / vegetation clearance	LVRP, BCC	Staff time Volunteer time
1.4 Maintain open water in ponds.	Re open Belvoir Pond, then assess for Canadian pond weed and establish bi-annual clearance of Canadian pondweed / other vegetation Annual clearance of encroaching vegetation from Minnowburn Pond.	Open water in ponds will be maintained for wildfowl and aquatic animals.	Belvoir Pond: To be discussed with Woodland Trust Minnowburn Pond: annual.	LVRP, Woodland Trust, National Trust	Staff time Volunteer time
1.5 Maintain three giant bird tables	Continued maintenance at Lock Keeper's Cottage (LKC), STLD, and McIlroy Park.	Provision of winter food source for birds.	Cut back any dominant species and re-seed in winter if required.	LVRP, LCCC, BCC and volunteers	Partner led Staff time Volunteer time

1.6 Surveillance of Widely Spread Species (WSS) across the Regional Park	Surveillance through survey and monitoring of WSS	Effectiveness of management methods can be assessed and early warning of WSS will direct landowner control measures.	Survey summer 2023 Monitoring ongoing Follow up survey in five years 2028	LVRP, all partners and volunteers	Staff time Volunteer time
1.7 Control WSS.	Liaise with and support landowners to prioritize the WSS species for removal from sites in LVRP.	WSS will be managed across the LVRP area.	2023/early 2024.	LVRP, BCC, LCCC, National Trust, DAERA, Forest Service and all partners and landowners	Staff time Contractors
1.8 Co-ordinate Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management.	Establish and facilitate an INNS group. Develop an INNS Action Plan	Facilitate and steer direct control measures through coordinated management of INNS	Establish group early 2025 Develop Action Plan through 2025/6	LVRP, BCC, LCCC, National Trust, DAERA, Forest Service and all partners and landowners.	Staff time

1.9 Continued monitoring of LVRP animal species.	Continue to undertake surveys in the Regional Park for the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme, All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey and the British Trust for Ornithology. Butterflies (weekly from April to October per transect, bats (two Surveys in August per transect, bees (monthly surveys from April to October, squirrels, and birds (monthly surveys).	Annual Species Database for dissemination to partner organisations.	Seasonal monitoring as per each animal group.	LVRP, BTO, CEDAR, BCNI, NDBC, BCC, LCCC	Staff time Volunteer time
1.10 Educate and engage children in conservation principles and respect for the natural environment through engagement and activity programme.	Four bushcraft events per year	Children will have a deeper understanding of the importance of biodiversity through memorable experiences.	Four bushcraft days per year.	LVRP	Staff time

1.11 Belvoir Park Forest Community Regeneration Project. Preservation and regeneration of veteran oak trees in Belvoir Park Forest.	Grow 500 oak whips and plant over five years.	Veteran oak gene pool will be regenerated. Local communities will be engaged through collection and planting of acorns.	2023 – 2028 with collection limited to mast years.	LVRP, Forestry Service, BCC, Woodland Trust.	Staff time Volunteer time Approx £,500 pots compost stakes etc.
1.12 Woodland tree management	Continue 10 tasks per year in Belvoir ASSI haloing around veteran oaks. After care and pruning of trees planted historically in LVRP at Belvoir Wood,	Favourable management of developing and established woodland will support healthy woodland	Annual tasks scheduled	LVRP, Volunteers, BCC, LCCC, Woodland Trust, National Trust	Staff time Volunteer time
1.13 Support All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and Local pollinator projects.	Targets in line with BCC 'Bee-licious' project and LCCC's Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Deliver one public awareness event per year.	People will be more aware of importance of pollinators.	2023-2028	LVRP, BCC, LCCC	Staff time Volunteer time

114 Explore additional areas that would support pollinators	Five new areas to be initially assessed for regeneration potential to either a) support natural regeneration through annual cutting or b) sow with locally sourced wildflower seed.	Increased habitat favourable to pollinators in the Regional Park.	One site assessed per year in May	LVRP and all partners	Staff time
115 Protect south facing soil banks for pollinators	Identify 5 south facing soil banks for protection	Protect habitat favourable to solitary bees	Five sites identified in 2024	LVRP and all partners	Staff time
116 Retain Green Flag status of sites in LVRP: STLD, Barnett's Demesne, and Castle Gardens.	Ongoing targets set in partnership with BCC and LCCC.	Green Flag status will be retained.	2023-2028	LVRP, BCC, LCCC	Staff time

Theme: Visitors Strategic Aim: To manage and monitor visitors to the Regional Park, to deliver and support events and sustainable tourism						
Annual Tasks						
	Objective	Targets	Outcomes	Timescale	Lead Partner in BOLD	Costs
	2.1 Improved and more widespread monitoring of public use through counters.	Collect data from eight existing counters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 towpath counters • 1 visitor centre counter • 1 Giants Ring counter Collate data from partner organisations within LVRP. Disseminate data through publications and presentations.	A comprehensive data set of data to evaluate public use, which will assist the ongoing management and promotion of LVRP.	Annual monitoring	LVRP, DfI, all partners	Staff time £3,100 annual data collection costs
	2.2 Improve user-safety on the towpath.	Post one Social media safety-use comment per month. Release one safety press release per annum.	The towpath will be a safer environment for all users, with promotion of the Towpath Code.	Ongoing, 2023 - 2028	LVRP, DfI, BCC, LCCC	Staff time

	<p>2.3 Promote considerate use of the towpath by all users, through a towpath initiative.</p>	<p>The towpath initiative will involve one week of events and activities aimed at all user groups, to be held annually, promoting considerate use of the towpath by all users. Whilst the focus still remains the Towpath Code alignment with the One Path Initiative will support a broader province wide approach</p> <p>Target groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers • Cyclists • Dog owners 	<p>Users will have better awareness of the importance of considerate use of this shared space.</p>	<p>Annually during summer months</p>	<p>LVRP, DfI, BCC, LCCC, Sustrans, PSNI, local cycling and walking clubs, DfI Roads</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
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	2.4 Ensure, through ongoing partnership and co-ordination, good standards of access for visitors.	Ongoing monitoring of 42 km (17km-towpath, 25km-other trails) access paths, through Ranger Service.	Landowners and stakeholder organisations will be supported in delivering their respective inspection and maintenance regimes for paths and trails. Maintenance issues will be reported in a timely manner.	Weekly patrols by Ranger Service	LVRP patrols and reporting on towpath. All partners to maintain their sections	Staff time Volunteer time £350 tools (Estimated combined value of partners' maintenance programmes is £150,000.)
	2.5 To maintain a clean towpath for all visitors.	Twice weekly patrols and litter lifts along towpath. Twice weekly litter lifts and bins emptied from Drumbridge and Lockview car parks.	The towpath will be a clean and pleasant environment for visitors	Ongoing twice-weekly checks and litter lifts	LVRP, DfI	Staff time £400 equipment and bags
	2.6 To maintain interpretation signs and information boards.	One annual condition survey of LVRP signage to identify and action maintenance. Weekly graffiti removal and vegetation clearance of LVRP signage	Visitors will have access to clean and well-maintained visitor information	2023 – 2028 Yearly assessment and repairs Weekly cleaning	LVRP	Staff time £2,000 repairs

	2.7 To maintain good relationships with visitors and the public, on behalf of LVRP and all partners.	<p>To act as first point of contact and record all queries / complaints / feedback / incidents received.</p> <p>To disseminate information annually among partner organisations.</p>	<p>Standards of customer service will be maintained and enhanced.</p> <p>Ongoing efficiency savings for partner organisations in terms of public interface.</p>	Ongoing, 2023- 2028	LVRP for all partners: BCC, LCCC, Dfl, DfC, Forest Service, National Trust.	Staff time (on average 1500 queries per year)
	2.8 Maintain website to ensure availability of up-to-date information.	<p>Monthly update for current events, news and information.</p> <p>Annual review of information and amendments as appropriate.</p>	<p>People will have access to improved and current information about LVRP and its activities</p>	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP	<p>Staff time</p> <p>£850 per year for hosting and site maintenance</p>

Routine Tasks						
	2.9 To update and reprint promotional/visitor information leaflet for the lock keeper's site to include the industry lighter.	Print 5,000 copies.	Visitor information will be updated and improved.	2024	LVRP with BCC	£1100
	2.10 Collection of visitor feedback.	Conduct user surveys every five years using existing questionnaire, reviewed as appropriate.	Knowledge of visitor base will be updated; visitor needs and potential management issues relating to visitors will be better understood.	Survey in 2027	LVRP	Options: 1) Staff time and volunteer time 2) Staff time and student time 3) £3,400 per contractor-led survey
	2.11 To review, update, and reprint towpath leaflet.	Review towpath leaflet and update. Note: improve wider knowledge of the Regional Park. Print 12,000 copies.	Visitor information will be up to date and improved.	2028	LVRP, DfI – updates from all partners	£2000 (subject to change)

	2.12 To promote the Regional Park	<p>Work with partners to promote the Regional Park and its features and assets.</p> <p>Two articles per year in local publications.</p>	There will be increased awareness of the Regional Park	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, all partners	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Board time</p>
	2.13 Maintain safe and clear access on towpath and other paths	<p>Weekly ranger patrols identify and clear obstacles within competencies, clear fallen branches, cut vegetation, clear leaves, and mud etc. Liaise and report to landowners where outside competencies.</p>	People will have clear and safe access along towpath and adjoining paths	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, BCC, LCCC, DAERA, Forest Service, National Trust, DfI Rivers, DfI Roads, Woodland Trust, Housing Executive	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Landowners' health and safety and annual repair & maintenance budgets</p>

	2.14 Facilitate access to services and other organisations	Liaison with emergency services and event organisers to provide knowledge and facilitate access for operations and events throughout the park, either directly or through liaison with landowners.	Ensure speedy access during incidents and facilitate organised events.	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, all partners	Staff time
	2.15 Maintain River access for water sports and water-based activities.	Inspection of canoe access points and associated safety features and action prompt repair where necessary.	Safe accessibility to the water will be maintained for water based activities	Ongoing 2023-2028	LVRP, DfI Rivers, LCCC, BCC	Staff time

Theme: Community Strategic Aim: To encourage involvement of the community and to develop volunteering in the Regional Park						
	Objective	Targets	Outcomes	Timescale	Lead Partner in BOLD	Costs
Annual Tasks						
	3.1 To maintain the high standards of the existing LVRP volunteer programme, identify areas for growth and maintain best practice in volunteer management.	Continue to manage 4 established volunteer roles with associated support functions, to include: 1) Weekly Conservation Volunteer group 2) Heritage Guides 3) Volunteer Rangers 4) Wildlife monitoring/surveying Identify further volunteering opportunities, as appropriate and subject to funding and potential for ongoing volunteer management training for appropriate staff.	Best practice will be maintained in the delivery of the LVRP volunteer programme.	Every three years. Review next in Nov 2026	LVRP	Staff time Volunteer time

	3.2 To upskill volunteers in conservation and heritage.	Two opportunities for training per year.	Volunteers will have new skills and experience, where possible, leading to increased opportunities for employment.	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, training organisations	Staff time Volunteer time £2,000 per year allocated to volunteer programme
	3.3 To engage people through a vibrant and varied events programme.	Delivery of an annual events program to engage with a wide range of the general public on local heritage and biodiversity. 25 events to be delivered each year. Dissemination of levels of engagement through LVRP Annual Report.	People will have increased knowledge and awareness of local heritage and biodiversity. Opportunities for partnership will be created.	Ongoing 2023-2028	LVRP, BCC, LCCC, DfI	Staff time Volunteer time £2,200 per year design and print costs £460 per year support equipment

	3.4 Expand and promote curriculum-based educational programme through Lagan Valley Learning website.	<p>Expand access and use of Lagan Valley Learning website through schools.</p> <p>Target five schools per annum.</p> <p>Circulate details in e-zine for schools.</p>	More schools will be engaged, and children will have learned about the natural and cultural heritage of LVRP through active and engaging curriculum-based activities.	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, schools	<p>Staff time</p> <p>£360 per year for web hosting</p> <p>£300 per year website maintenance</p>
	3.5 Increase engagement with various media to disseminate as widely as possible the work and successes of LVRP and increase brand-awareness.	<p>1) Press release to local papers following key achievements and awards</p> <p>2) Weekly posts on social media</p> <p>3) Feature LVRP or projects in TV and Radio, at least one per year.</p>	People will be more widely aware of the profile of LVRP, its successes, and the range of work that is carried out.	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP	Staff time

	3.6 Encourage more coordinated marketing through setting up a joint focus group.	<p>Set up a marketing group and agree common promotion actions.</p> <p>Meet quarterly to review progress.</p> <p>LVRP activities / events to be featured in Council and other publications throughout the year.</p>	LVRP will be more effectively and consistently promoted through partnership between the two Councils.	Ongoing 2023-2028	LVRP, BCC, LCCC	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Board time</p>
	3.7 To promote the cultural heritage of LVRP through public talks.	<p>Hold three talks throughout the year on a variety of heritage topics. Possible topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built heritage • People • Changing Landscapes • Archaeology through the ages 	The unique history and heritage of LVRP will be celebrated and promoted, and knowledge will be increased.	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, DfC, DfI, QUB, CAF, Ulster University, Lagan Navigation Trust, DAERA	Staff time
	3.8 Continue to deliver <i>My River</i> initiative	Deliver three river clean ups with river-based canoe and kayak support monitor pollution, reduce marine litter and engage with local communities and partners.	The river & canal will be cleaner Communities will be more involved in local environment action	Ongoing 2023 - 2028	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DfI, KNIB	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Volunteer time</p>

Theme: Landscape Strategic Aim: To proactively protect and celebrate the character of the Regional Park and AONB landscape						
	Objective	Targets	Outcomes	Timescale	Lead Partner in BOLD	Cost
	Annual Tasks					
	4.1 To protect the designated landscape from inappropriate development.	Respond to all planning consultations within 30 days. (Minor applications dealt with directly, major applications referred to LVRP Board).	The special landscape qualities of LVRP and the AONB will be protected for future generations.	Ongoing 2023-2028	LVRP	Staff time
	4.2 To provide a photographic record of the changing landscape within LVRP.	Continue six records of landscape four times per year. To deliver 4 fixed-point seasonal photographs per year.	An important legacy record of the changing landscape will be created and archived for future generations.	Ongoing 2023-2028	LVRP, NIEA	Staff time

Routine Tasks						
	4.3 To complete development work of BCC and LCCC Local Development Plans, ensuring appropriate representation of LVRP.	Provide representation to senior planners and stakeholder consultations during the respective LDP development phases.	The special landscape qualities of LVRP and the AONB will be protected for future generations.	2024-2025	LVRP, BCC, LCCC	Staff time Board time

	Theme: Heritage Strategic Aim: To protect and celebrate the rich historic and cultural legacy of the Regional Park					
	Objective	Targets	Outcomes	Timescale	Lead Partner in BOLD	Costs
	Annual Tasks					
	5.1 To continue active management of the Giants Ring Scheduled Monument in State Care.	Chair and facilitate bi-monthly meetings of the Giants Ring Stakeholder group. Input to Historic Environment Division (HED) Conservation Management Plan for Giant's Ring.	The Giant's Ring will be better managed and protected, and its cultural value better understood. Access to the monument will be improved, and it will be a safer place to visit and enjoy.	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP, Giants Ring Stakeholder Group: HED, PSNI, National Trust, BCC, Local Stakeholders	Staff time
	5.2 Organise two volunteer tasks onsite each year.	Carry out and promote two community-based conservation tasks on the site each year.	Site will be better managed, and people will be more informed of its heritage	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP	Staff time Volunteer time

	5.3 Organise two public events onsite each year.	Carry out and promote two public events at the Giants Ring each year.	Site will be better managed, and people will be more informed of its heritage	Ongoing, 2023-2028	LVRP	Staff time Volunteer time
	5.4 Maintain management and access to the Lock Keeper's Cottage and the Industry lighter.	Continue to work with BCC under existing SLA to open the Lock Keeper's Cottage and Industry lighter to the general public five days per week and monthly weekend openings.	Visitors will have continued access to vibrant 'living heritage' assets, increasing opportunities for engagement and enjoyment.	Ongoing, in accordance with SLA	LVRP	Staff time Volunteer time
	5.5 To provide heritage tourism package for the Lock Keeper's site.	Facilitate five tour requests per year.	New audiences will be developed and tourism within the region will be enhanced.	Five tours per year, 2023-2028	LVRP	Staff time Volunteer time

Theme: Health & Recreation Strategic Aim: To promote the benefits of green open spaces, within the area, for health and wellbeing and to support appropriate recreational activities						
	Objective	Targets	Outcomes	Timescale	Lead Partner in BOLD	Costs
Annual Tasks						
	6.1 Improve knowledge of wider recreational use through data capture.	Data-capture relating to activities organised by outside groups. Collation and dissemination of these data via Annual Report.	LVRP will have wider knowledge about the profile of recreational use across LVRP, to inform future management and maintenance.	Annually, 2023-2028	LVRP with all partners supporting by providing details of events for LVRP to record	Staff time
	6.2 Support external groups wishing to pursue activities in the Regional Park	Facilitate 5 outside groups each year providing access, event planning guidance and landowner knowledge.	External groups will be supported for events in LVRP.	Annually, 2023-2028	LVRP with all partners supporting by providing details of events for LVRP to record	Staff time

Shelf-Ready Projects for Future Consideration

In addition to the daily operations and routine tasks outlined within the above Immediate Action Plan, we have identified a series of shelf-ready projects for implementation across the lifetime of the Five-Year Management Plan. These projects are to be delivered external to the tasks listed within the Immediate Action Plan and only if external funding is available to support and enable project delivery.

Shelf-Ready Projects (Long-List)

Projects were identified through consultation with LVRP staff, board, volunteers, and management committee. Following consultation, all projects were scoped and developed and included on a long-list of potential shelf-ready projects. This long-list is shown below.

Project	Theme	Delivery Timescale
The Archaeology of the Lagan Valley Regional Park	Heritage	Medium
The Big Lagan Dig	Heritage	Long
Golf Club Forum	Community	Long
Habitat Mapping/Nature Recovery Plan	Biodiversity	Short-Long
Urban Fringe and Rural Areas	Community	Medium
Community Groups & Forums	Community	Short-Long
Volunteer Strategy	Community	Short-Long
Promotion & Marketing Strategy	Community	Short-Long
Belvoir Park – ASSI Renewal of Annual Licence Agreement	Biodiversity	Short-Long
Recreation Strategy	Health & Wellbeing	Long
Birds and Pollinators Resources	Biodiversity	Short-Medium
Visitor Accessibility: Establish Signposted Routes	Visitors	Long
Biodiversity Outreach Programme	Community	Medium
By the Banks of the Lagan II	Heritage	Medium
LVRP Therapeutic Walking Routes	Health & Wellbeing	Long
Heritage Focused Cross-Community Project	Heritage	Short-Long

Table 2 – Long List of Shelf-Ready Projects

Shelf-Ready Projects (Short-List)

A filtering and prioritisation process was conducted for the long-list of identified shelf-ready projects based on a range of factors including:

- Funding Available
- Urgency of Project Need
- Alignment with Strategic Priorities
- Consultation Feedback
- Delivery in Previous Management Plan
- Potential for Project Delivery over Five-Year Management Plan

As a result, PGG has prioritised shelf-ready projects and created the following short-list. Below, these projects have been ranked according to their level of priority and their estimated delivery timescale.

- Short Term – 2023 – 2024
- Medium Term – 2025 – 2026
- Long Term – 2027 – 2028

Priority	Project	Theme	Delivery Timescale
H	Nature Recovery Plan	Biodiversity	Short-Long
H	Heritage Focused Cross-Community Project	Heritage	Short-Long
H	Promotion & Marketing Strategy	Community	Short-Long
M	Volunteer Strategy	Community	Short-Long
M	Belvoir Park – ASSI Management	Biodiversity	Short-Long
M	The Archaeology of the Lagan Valley Regional Park	Heritage	Medium
M	Visitor Accessibility: Establish Signposted Routes	Visitors	Long
L	The Big Lagan Dig	Heritage	Long
L	Birds & Pollinators Resources	Biodiversity	Short-Medium
L	By the Banks of the Lagan II	Heritage	Medium
L	LVRP Therapeutic Walking Routes	Health & Wellbeing	Long
L	Biodiversity Outreach Programme	Community	Medium
L	Replacing Entire Suite of Interpretation Panels	Heritage	Medium-Long

Table 3 – Short-List of Shelf-Ready Projects

Action Plan: Shelf-Ready Projects for Future Consideration

This section of the Management Plan provides a detailed depiction of all identified shelf-ready projects, encompassing both the short-listed, priority projects and those from the long-list that did not make it to the final section.

Each shelf-ready project is presented with clear SMART actions, specifying how delivery can be measured, associated costs, designated delivery partners and expected timeframes.

Short-Listed Priority Projects

Below is a detailed description of each short-listed, priority project.

Project	Nature Recovery Plan			Priority	H	Theme	Biodiversity
Overview	Through consultation it has been identified that a Nature Recovery Plan is critical to the future of LVRP. All stakeholder groups expressed the importance of increasing the knowledge of habitats and ecological resources within LVRP. This project will be delivered across two phases. <div><div>1.</div><div>Habitat Mapping – Survey all habitats within LVRP (e.g., woodland, wetland, riverside, and grassland) and complete assessment of quality of habitat.</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Recovery Plan – Based on the outcomes of habitat surveying, develop a nature recovery plan that outlines how linkages can be developed between high quality and low-quality areas to improve overall habitat quality, ultimately connecting all areas within the map.</div></div>						
Targets	<div><div>•</div><div>Successfully map all habits within LVRP, with a quality/standardised ranking and management or guidance notes on improvements.</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Successfully develop and deliver Nature Recovery Plan.</div></div>						
Outcomes	<div><div>•</div><div>Maintenance and enhancement of habitats</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Linkages between habitats</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Establishing external links between habitats and non-LVRP habitats</div></div>						
Estimated Dates	Short-Long Term	Estimated Costs	Employee time for 12-18 months (£35,000-£40,000) & additional general capital costs of £5,000		Delivery Partners	LVRP, BCCC, LCCC, NT, Dfl, DAERA, FS, local landowners, and farmers.	
Potential Funding	DAERA Environment Fund Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund Aviva Community Fund DAERA Forestry Grants						
Priority Rationale	Due to the strong levels of support for this project across consultation and its increased importance due to the ongoing impacts of climate change and increased visitor numbers, it is important that a strategic approach to habitat protection is implemented. Funding sources are readily available to support delivery of this project.						

Project	Heritage Focused Cross-Community Project			Priority	H	Theme	Heritage
Overview	Develop cross community project 'Our Remarkable Trees', involving groups from 3 intergenerational, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active involvement from each of the three targeted community groups, representing various age groups, religious affiliations, and ethnic backgrounds.• Engage a specified percentage of the total community members from each group to participate actively in project-related activities.• Identify and document a predetermined number of 'remarkable trees' showcasing their unique qualities and significance.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of cross community relationships and social legacy-building• The successful identification and documentation of remarkable trees will aid in their preservation, raising awareness about their ecological importance and cultural value.• Increase participant's understanding of the environment						
Estimated Dates	Short Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff & Volunteer Time		Delivery Partners	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, SEUPB, 3 groups	
Potential Funding	SEUPB, PEACEPLUS						
Priority Rationale	This project is a high priority as SEUPB's PEACEPLUS programme is currently open. SEUPB are currently accepting applications to a range of PEACEPLUS Investment Areas. Whilst the call for Investment Area 5.1 is yet to open, it is predicted that it will open soon. LVRP can collaborate with Lead Partners such as LCCC and BCC, functioning as a delivery partner to assist them in achieving the targets and goals outlined in Investment Area 5.1.						

Project	Promotion & Marketing Strategy			Priority	H	Theme	Community
Overview	Throughout consultation, multiple stakeholder groups stressed there was a clear need over the next Five-Year Management Plan to develop and implement an enhanced, strategic approach to better promote and market LVRP and the activities of the park. Identified areas this could include are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media• Engagement with Tourism NI, tourism departments in councils, council figures and local politicians• Promotional materials e.g., leaflets• Collaboration with universities e.g., Ulster University's Marketing Department.• Collaboration with local businesses e.g., leaflet promoting businesses located near towpath (businesses pay £15 to feature)• Increasing awareness of LVRP and work of organisation e.g., display work of volunteers/ positive signage						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop new working group to oversee strategy development.• Confirm various components for new strategy development and delivery.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of a new marketing & promotion strategy• Successful achievement of SMART actions and projects identified within new strategy						
Estimated Dates	Short Term – Long Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff & Volunteer Time		Delivery Partners	LVRP Staff, Board, Volunteers & Management Committee	
Potential Funding	As there are no presently identifiable funding options for this project, this project would be funded through standard operating resources,						
Priority Rationale	Throughout consultation, this was one of the most raised concerns across several stakeholder groups, it is essential therefore that this project is delivered with a clear, strategic focus over the lifetime of the Five-Year Management Plan to support the growth and development of LVRP.						

Project	Volunteer Strategy			Priority	M	Theme	Community
Overview	Given that the volunteer program in LVRP has consistently reached the standard of the Investing in Volunteers accreditation for many years, there may be scope to build on this success through the development of new roles in the volunteer program. Additional volunteer roles should be clearly defined, supportive and unequivocally distinct from staff roles. Potential new supporting roles for volunteers could both help in capacity building for the organisation and establish a pathway to volunteer roles with more responsibility.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify additional areas and roles where volunteers could support the operational needs of LVRP.Develop and clearly define these roles.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Additional volunteer roles that can support organisational needs and staff needsModification of support structures to facilitate additional roles						
Estimated Dates	Short-Long Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff Time		Delivery Partners	LVRP Board, LVRP Staff, LVRP Volunteers	
Potential Funding	National Lottery Awards for All National Lottery People and Communities Aviva Community Fund Charles Hayward Foundation Small Grants Programme Garfield Weston Foundation						
Priority Rationale	Throughout consultation, an identified key strength of LVRP is the people who support the work the staff do; through the board, volunteers, and visitors. If LVRP is to grow and develop, increasing the capacity of the organisation is critical. Across the lifetime of the Five-Year Management Plan, LVRP staff, board and volunteers should work together to review the existing strategy and develop a new pathway. Funding is available to support delivery of volunteer roles.						

Project	Belvoir Park Forest – ASSI Management				Priority	M	Theme	Biodiversity	
Overview	Within the previous Management Plan, there was a project delivered that focused on developing a working group for Belvoir ASSI. This was successfully achieved. Through consultation, it has been identified that continuing to manage Belvoir Park favourably is an important part of the Five-Year Management Plan.								
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 days per year ‘haloing’ 40 veteran oak trees• Regular meadow management• Regular invasive control management• Acorn collection and planting								
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the ancient and veteran oaks from degradation• Bring Belvoir ASSI into a favourable condition• Maintain the locally endemic gene pool of the Oak trees in the region								
Estimated Dates	Short-Long Term	Estimated Costs	Staff & Volunteer Time DAERA funding LVRP budget costs of circa. £7,500			Delivery Partners	DAERA, Service	LVRP,	Forest
Potential Funding	Ulster Garden Villages DAERA Forestry Grants								
Priority Rationale	Throughout consultation, the importance of maintaining the ASSI status of Belvoir Park has been made clear by various stakeholders. This project is a priority over the lifetime of this Five-Year Management Plan and will be delivered through LVRP’s budget, with support from identified potential funding pots.								

Project	The Archaeology of Lagan Valley Regional Park			Priority	M	Theme	Heritage
Overview	Through consultation, this project was identified as a priority for delivery due to the significant public interest it would generate. Existing data will be gathered on all monuments within LVRP. This will involve gathering data from the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities, research and consultation with landowners, Queen’s University’s Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork and other relevant stakeholders. The project will also involve local volunteers and skill them up to carry out important field survey work and research existing data sources and identify a follow up research project that will require some sort of excavation.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train 10 volunteers• Carry out 5-day training course• Recruit 5 volunteer’s participants• Gain two press releases about project						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record built heritage of Regional Park as tool for future conservation• Promote the park and its archaeological heritage• Increase our understanding of the Regional Park’s heritage• Increase skills and knowledge of local volunteers• Identify potential future archaeological excavation sites						
Estimated Dates	Medium Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff Time – 10 days QUB Costs - £20,000		Delivery Partners	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DfC, QUB CAF, Local Volunteers	
Potential Funding	Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Research Stream Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Revival Stream Garfield Weston Foundation National Lottery Awards for All Northern Ireland National Lottery Grants for Heritage				The Pilgrim Trust		
Priority Rationale	This project was listed for delivery within the previous Five-Year Management Plan, though was not delivered. Consultation has identified that there is still a clear appetite for delivery of this project within this Five-Year Management Plan, providing funding can be sourced.						

Project	Visitor Accessibility: Establish Signposted Routes			Priority	M	Theme	Visitors
Overview	During the previous management plan, the options for linking the towpath to other greenways identified in the Local Development Plan were explored. The next step is to establish officially marked routes linking the towpath to other greenways identified.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish clear linkages between the towpath and identified existing greenways, ensuring seamless connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.Ensure the newly signposted route is accessible to a diverse range of users.Enhance safety along the route by implementing appropriate signage.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The establishment of a signposted route will create a network that seamlessly connects the towpath with other greenways, allowing for expanded travel options.The increased accessibility and usage of the route may lead to improved physical and mental health for individuals who utilise the new established routes for recreational activities or commuting.The establishment of the signposted routes may attract tourism, thereby boosting local businesses and the economy.Implementing clear signage along the identified route will contribute to a safer and more secure environment for all users.						
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Budget - £20,000		Delivery Partners	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DfI, DfC, National Trust, Belfast Hills Partnership.	
Potential Funding	DAERA – funded the original project for ‘identifying options for linking the towpath to other greenways in the Local Development Plan’. Aviva Community Fund						
Priority Rationale	As stated above, the identified options for linking the towpath to other greenways was explored in the previous management plan. It has been identified through consultation, that this project needs to be continued for the impact to be realised. Thus, it was agreed that this was a project that merited delivery within the lifetime of the 2023-2028 Five-Year Management Plan, however, it is reliant on external funding for completion.						

Project	The Big Lagan Dig			Priority	L	Theme	Heritage
Overview	Through consultation, there was a need identified to deliver a project on the 'Archaeology of Lagan Valley Regional Park'. Following on from the gathering and recording of all data information and field surveying through delivery of this project, it is anticipated there will be a need for intrusive research at a targeted site to carry out further archaeological excavation. The project will work with Queen's University's Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork to complete out an archaeological excavation and will involve local volunteers in the actual excavation working in partnership with students from the centre. QUB will oversee and arrange all licencing and recording.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train & involve 10 volunteers in excavation• Carry out dig and produce archaeological gazetteer• Gain two press releases about project						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the Regional Park and its archaeological heritage• Increase our understanding of the Regional Park's built heritage• Increase skills and knowledge of local volunteers						
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Estimated Costs	QUB Equipment & Training - £20,000		Delivery Partners	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DfC, QUB CAF, Local Volunteers	
Potential Funding	Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Research Stream Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Revival Stream Garfield Weston Foundation National Lottery Awards for All Northern Ireland National Lottery Grants for Heritage Ulster Garden Villages						
Priority Rationale	Similarly, to the Archaeology of Lagan Valley Regional Park project, this is a project that has been identified through consultation as having been listed on the previous Five-Year Management Plan and one that there is still a demand for. As project delivery is dependent on completion of the Archaeology of Lagan Valley Regional Park project, and the availability of external funding, it has been ranked with a lower priority.						

Project	Birds & Pollinators Resources			Priority	L	Theme	Biodiversity
Overview	Through consultation, it has been identified that there is a need to continue investing in expanding and increasing the available resources to support birds and pollinators within LVRP. Sites have been identified for delivery of this project, with a strategic planting approach required prior to project delivery.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Linear wildflower patches with mixes for birds and pollinators to be planted along towpath; one 10m2 patch for each km.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved habitats and resources for birds and pollinatorsIncreased numbers of birds within LVRPIncreased numbers of pollinators within LVRP						
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff & Volunteer Time £2,000 seeds £3,500 plugs £430 tools		Delivery Partners	LVRP, DfI, DfI Rivers	
Potential Funding	National Lottery Awards For All: Northern Ireland Aviva Community Fund Charles Hayward Foundation Small Grants Programme						
Priority Rationale	This project has been assigned a lower priority due to its relative importance compared to other identified projects. Through consultation, it was agreed that this was a project that merited delivery within the lifetime of the Five-Year Management Plan, however, only should funding and internal capacity allow it.						

Project	By the Banks of the Lagan II			Priority	L	Theme	Heritage
Overview	This project seeks to build on a previous publication that outlined the heritage of the wider history of the river Lagan and the areas and communities that it ran through. This primarily focused on the Belfast area. There is considerable scope for a new publication that focuses on the heritage of Lisburn area of the river Lagan.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launch publication of ‘By the Banks of the Lagan II’						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In-depth knowledge of the Lagan heritage will be expanded and more accessible, and will capture valuable oral testimony of people who lived and worked along the Lagan						
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Estimated Costs	£18,000		Delivery Partners	LVRP, Ben Simon (author)	
Potential Funding	Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Research Stream Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Revival Stream Garfield Weston Foundation National Lottery Awards for All Northern Ireland National Lottery Grants for Heritage						
Priority Rationale	Through consultation, it was noted that this is a project that has a strong foundation that would enable expedited project delivery. However, it is also noted that there are projects with greater priorities and therefore this project has a lower priority, which is to be delivered only if funding is available for it.						

Project	LVRP Therapeutic Walking Routes			Priority	L	Theme	Health & Wellbeing
Overview	Through consultation, it was identified that there is potential for future project delivery focused on therapeutic walking routes. It has been confirmed that walking routes have already been identified and there is strong alignment with the LVRP priority theme of Health & Wellbeing. Partnerships have previously been developed with the Public Health Agency and local Health Trusts.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to develop partnerships with the Public Health Agency and local Health Trusts.Confirm therapeutic walking routes meet the criteria of strategic health and wellbeing policies.Monitor use, with a target of 100 new users over five years.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Public Health Agency and local Health Trusts will be supported to deliver mental and emotional health objectivesIncrease in LVRP usersImproved health and wellbeing of new LVRP users						
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff Time		Delivery Partners	LVRP, LCCC, BCC, Public Health Agency, Health Trusts	
Potential Funding	Garfield Weston Foundation Aviva Community Fund						
Priority Rationale	It was identified through consultation that there is significant alignment between this project and the priority theme of Health & Wellbeing. However, it was also noted that this project requires funding and support from the Public Health Agency and local Health Trusts for delivery. This has resulted in the project having a lower priority.						

Project	Biodiversity Outreach Programme			Priority	L	Theme	Community
Overview	Throughout consultation, a common theme identified was the need for further promotion of the work of LVRP and to continue building strong links and relationships with local communities. It was also recognised that there is a need to do this in a strategic manner when targeting different groups within the local community. Local children and schools have been identified as requiring a separate, strategic approach.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm biodiversity focus of outreach programme.• Identify local schools to partner with for project delivery.• Develop suitable and appropriate projects in partnership with each local school.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutually beneficial and productive working relationships established with local schools.• Children will have a deeper understanding of the importance of biodiversity through involvement and memorable experiences.						
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Estimated Costs	LVRP Staff & Volunteer Time Tools - £220		Delivery Partners	LVRP, Local School Staff	
Potential Funding	Garfield Weston Foundation Aviva Community Fund						
Priority Rationale	Although the need for delivery of this project was confirmed, it was also recognised during consultation that this project is only deliverable should sufficient staff and volunteer capacity be made available.						

Project	Replacing Suite of Interpretation Panels			Priority	L	Theme	Heritage
Overview	The project involves the replacement of the existing suite of interpretation panels within LVRP park. The interpretation panels are informative displays strategically placed throughout LVRP park to enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the park's natural, historical, cultural, and recreational aspects. This project aims to revitalise the park's communication infrastructure, providing visitors with accurate, engaging, and visually appealing information.						
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhanced visitor experience, enriching visitors' understanding of LVRP's significance.Ensure all information on the new interpretation panels are approved and up to date.Ensure all the new panels meet accessibility standards.						
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visitors gain a deeper understanding of LVRP's natural, historical, and cultural aspects.Visitors receive accurate and up-to-date information about LVRP's features.The panels' adherence to accessibility standards allows all visitors, including those with disabilities, to access the information.						
Estimated Dates	Medium-Long Term	Estimated Costs	£145,000 signage costs LVRP Staff Time		Delivery Partners	LVRP, BCC, LCCC, DfC, DAERA, National Trust and any other relevant landowner	
Potential Funding	Potential to break project into phases for funding purposes. Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Revival Stream Historic Environment Fund – Regeneration Stream National Lottery Grants for Heritage National Lottery Awards for All: Northern Ireland National Lottery: People and Communities Ford Britain Trust						
Priority Rationale	Although the need for delivery of this project was confirmed, it was also recognised during consultation that this project is only deliverable should sufficient funding become available.						

Additional Priority Projects (Long-List)

As a result of the prioritisation process, some projects were not included within the final shortlist. These projects are still viewed as aspirational and if delivered, can have a significantly positive impact on the future growth and development of LVRP. Each of the following projects do not require additional funding to deliver, though would require significant time from LVRP staff, board, management committee and volunteers. Each of these projects are detailed in the tables below.

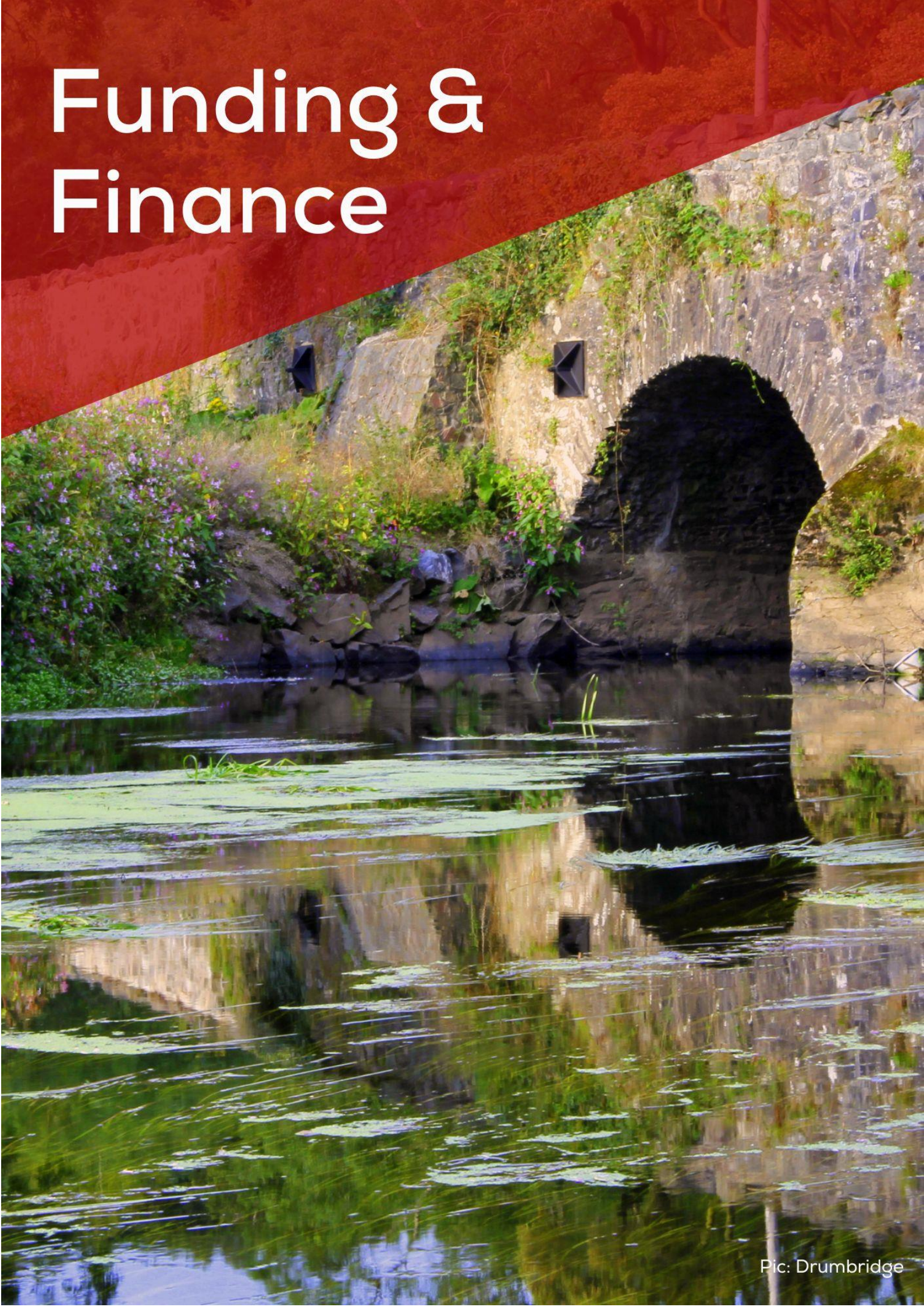
Project	Urban Fringe & Rural Areas		Theme	Community
Overview	Through consultation, it has been identified that there needs to be a focus on establishing relationships with other nature parks and green areas within the wider Belfast and Lisburn areas. It was recognised that this could have a significantly positive impact through knowledge sharing and learning on best practices across operational and management areas.			
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm shortlist of nature parks and green spaces to engage with• Agree scope of relationship and develop clear terms of reference to govern project			
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutually beneficial and productive working relationships established with nature parks and green spaces• Increased knowledge of best practice and innovative methods in operational and management areas			
Estimated Dates	Medium Term	Delivery Partners	LVRP, BCC, LCCC	
Priority Rationale	Although the need for delivery of this project was confirmed, it was also recognised during consultation that this project is only deliverable should sufficient staffing capacity be available.			

Project	Community Groups & Forums		Theme	Community
Overview	Throughout consultation, the breadth, and varying complexities of relationships with local stakeholders that impact LVRP was recognised. Many stakeholders understood the importance of maintaining positive and beneficial relationships with local communities and identified a need to establish productive and structured forums and methods for achieving this objective. This project will focus on identifying where such relationships need to be established and engaging with local communities. Project delivery will need to be phased due to the limited capacity of LVRP staff.			
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete scoping exercise to determine communities with greatest need for formal relations• Engage with three local communities or community groups• Agree structured and scheduled forum for community engagement			
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutually beneficial and productive working relationships established with local communities			
Estimated Dates	Short-Long Term	Delivery Partners	LVRP, Local Communities	
Priority Rationale	Although the need for delivery of this project was confirmed, it was also recognised during consultation that this project is only deliverable should sufficient staff capacity be available.			

Project	Golf Club Forum		Theme	Community
Overview	LVRP borders and shares boundaries with several golf clubs, who privately own former parkland that has a significant volume of biodiversity present throughout their land. These clubs include Belvoir Golf Club, Malone Golf Club, Aberdelgy Golf Club, Dunmurry Golf Club and Balmoral Golf Club. Whilst these clubs are in private ownership, they are also of high landscape character value and so efforts should be made to engage with the associated management teams.			
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a golf forum that meet twice per year• Improve biodiversity of 0.5ha of land			
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the biodiversity of Regional Park• Conserve the natural features of the Regional Park• Improve relationships with local businesses and develop further partner projects			
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Delivery Partners	LVRP, Local Golf Clubs	
Priority Rationale	Although the need for delivery of this project was confirmed, it was also recognised during consultation that this project is only deliverable should sufficient staffing capacity be available.			

Project	Recreation Strategy	Theme	Health & Wellbeing
Overview	During consultation, it was made known that LVRP previously had a Recreation Strategy, that provided a strategic focus on developing leisure activities within LVRP. This was a funded programme by DAERA that has since ended. It was expressed during consultation that should the necessary resources become available, there would be an interest in developing a new strategy.		
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with DAERA to confirm potential support for new strategy Complete scoping exercise to confirm leisure activities possible within LVRP Identify potential delivery partners for implementation of Recreation Strategy Develop a holistic approach to recreation including all water and land-based activities in the area 		
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a new Recreation Strategy Successful achievement of SMART actions and projects identified within new strategy 		
Estimated Dates	Long Term	Delivery Partners	LVRP, DAERA, ORNI
Priority Rationale	Although the need for delivery of this project was confirmed, it was also recognised during consultation that this project is only deliverable should sufficient staffing capacity and funding be available.		

Funding & Finance



Pic: Drumbridge

Funding & Finance

To successfully implement this management plan and realise the benefits of listed objectives across each of the priority themes, it is essential that LVRP can access sufficient funding and financial resources. This section will provide an overview of the current funding and financial situation, as well as identified potential funding sources and recommendations on options LVRP should pursue to ensure greater financial sustainability and overall delivery of the management plan.

Current Funding & Finances

LVRP operates within an annual budget provided by a small group of external funders. Within the last financial years accounts (Year End 31st March 2022), these were:

- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Department for Infrastructure
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Department for Communities

Funding received from these organisations contributes to the overall operational budget for LVRP. This supports costs including, but not limited to:

- Wages & Salaries
- Tools, Equipment & Clothing
- Rent
- Insurance
- Transport

Following an increased income during the Covid-19 pandemic, the annual budget for operating LVRP has slightly decreased yearly since 2020, from £212,805 to £207,263. Through the expert management of LVRP by its staff, a surplus has been maintained in this period, though again, has decreased in recent years, from £34,094 in 2020 to £7,700 in 2022.

With an ongoing cost of living crisis, rising inflation and political uncertainty, it is expected that there will be further constraints placed on the operational budget of LVRP. This increases the importance of leveraging outside sources of income to ensure delivery of shelf-ready projects that can support the continued growth and development of LVRP.

Potential Funding Sources

To support the delivery and implementation of this management plan, PGG have identified several potential funding sources that LVRP can engage to leverage additional funding for project delivery. Each of these will be outlined in further detail below, providing key insights into how each funding source can contribute to the successful delivery and implementation of this management plan.

There are three distinct groups of funding sources that have been identified:

- Active Funding Sources
- Open Funding Sources
- Closed Funding Sources

Active Funding Sources are those that have been identified through research and are open and active during the development of this management plan. Open Funding Sources are those that have been identified as available all year round or as having regular open calls. Closed Funding Sources are those that are available through the identified funder approaching organisations to receive funding, as opposed to the recipient approaching the funder, or have been identified as opening soon without a specified date confirmed.

All funding sources have been selected based on alignment between the funding source's priorities and target objectives and LVRP's strategic priority themes. Each fund can provide support to projects of different scales across the Five-Year Management Plan.

Active Funding Sources

Funding Organisation	SEUPB
Funding Programme	PEACEPLUS
Programme Overview	PEACEPLUS is the new cross-border funding Programme created to strengthen peace and prosperity within and between the border counties of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. A total of €1.1 billion is available across six different themes and twenty-two investment areas.
Programme Dates	2021-2027
Funding Intervention Available	<p>There is potential for LVRP to be a partner organisation in a PEACE PLUS funded project, specifically under theme 5 'Supporting a Sustainable and Better-Connected Future'. Projects that focus on environment and conservation are key for this theme. LVRP has potential to support a leading organisation applying under Investment Area 5.1, which targets organisations who are working in cross-border collaboration to facilitate the recovery of selected habitats and species.</p> <p>SEUPB further states how investment will be directed towards further delivery of conservation actions proven to redress biodiversity loss and preserve important environmental, social, and economic assets. An indicative budget of €40 million has been set for this Investment Area.</p> <p>The objective of this investment area is to enhance nature protection and biodiversity while also mitigating pollution. This initiative aims to expand the surface area of selected habitats and improve the overall condition of species' environments.</p>
Further Information	https://www.seupb.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/PEACEPLUS_Overview_24052023.pdf

Funding Organisation Department for Communities	
Funding Programme	Historic Environment Fund – Roof and Window Repair Stream
Programme Overview	<p>The Historic Environment Fund has been set up by the Department to stimulate action across the historic environment in support of their aim to help communities to enjoy and realise the value of the historic environment.</p> <p>This grant focuses on supporting applications for repair works to roofs and windows starting from May 2024. This is due to a reduced budget and late settlement.</p>
Programme Dates	July 2023 – 15 th September 2023
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Up to £6,000 per roof/Up to £12,000 for thatched buildings</p> <p>Open to all listed buildings except churches. Work to historic slated roofs, leadwork, chimney repairs, modern flat roofs, thatch roofs, 'tin' roofs, windows and glazing repairs are eligible. As focus is on repairs, replacement windows only supported where they clearly cannot be repaired.</p> <p>Ineligible work – work to listed churches, work to historic buildings that are not listed, alterations and improvements, maintenance such as clearing gutters or vegetation removal, demolitions and reinstatement and reconstruction where there is a lack of historical evidence of design and detail.</p>
Further Information	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-fund-roof-and-window-repair-stream

Funding Organisation	Department for Communities
Funding Programme	Historic Environment Fund – Regeneration Stream
Programme Overview	<p>The Historic Environment Fund has been set up by the Department to stimulate action across the historic environment in support of their aim to help communities to enjoy and realise the value of the historic environment.</p> <p>This grant focuses on supporting owners to carry out minor works to keep scheduled historic monuments protected where it can be demonstrated the works are necessary.</p>
Programme Dates	July 2023 – 31 st March 2024 (all works must be completed by close date)
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Up to £2,000 per project</p> <p>Eligible works – preventative maintenance, earthwork erosion repair, tree surgery, fencing, vegetation treatment, localised repair (boundary walls, gate pillars, replacement gates, etc), access and presentation and health and safety.</p> <p>Ineligible work – work to historic monuments which are not scheduled and capital repair work to scheduled historic monuments.</p>
Further Information	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-fund-scheduled-monument-regeneration-stream

Funding Organisation	Department for Communities
Funding Programme	Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Research Stream
Programme Overview	<p>The Historic Environment Fund has been set up by the Department to stimulate action across the historic environment in support of their aim to help communities to enjoy and realise the value of the historic environment.</p> <p>This grant focuses on support to stimulate heritage research work in Northern Ireland by funding initiatives that aim to carry out and/or share the results of research into the historic environment.</p>
Programme Dates	July 2023 – March 2024 (Work must be completed by 27 th March 2024)
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Up to £10,000 per project</p> <p>For research into historic buildings, therefore, applications can be considered from District Councils, voluntary groups, University departments, other third level research teams, and training bodies that comply with the above legislative requirements.</p> <p>For research into historic monuments or archaeological objects, applications can, in addition, be considered from private companies or partnerships.</p>
Further Information	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-fund-research-and-revival-streams

Funding Organisation	Department for Communities
Funding Programme	Historic Environment Fund – Heritage Revival Stream
Programme Overview	<p>The Historic Environment Fund has been set up by the Department to stimulate action across the historic environment in support of their aim to help communities to enjoy and realise the value of the historic environment.</p> <p>This grant focuses on support aimed at stimulating heritage projects that aim to increase public awareness of the heritage value of historic buildings and monuments in Northern Ireland. Such information can be communicated through a range of arts and media including conferences, seminars, awards, and publications.</p> <p>Heritage value may be understood as the intrinsic architectural, archaeological, or historic value of buildings, monuments, and places, or it may be the economic, environmental, and social value provided by such assets. Applications which seek to highlight overlooked aspects of heritage are particularly encouraged.</p> <p>Applications can be considered from District Councils, voluntary groups, University departments, other third level teams, and training bodies that comply with legislative requirements.</p>
Programme Dates	July 2023 – March 2024 (Work must be completed by 27 th March 2024)
Funding Intervention Available	Up to £10,000 per project
Further Information	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-fund-research-and-revival-streams

Open Funding Sources

Funding Organisation	National Lottery
Funding Programme	Awards For All: Northern Ireland
Programme Overview	<p>Funding is open to community projects that meet their criteria, with support available to deliver new or existing activity or to support your organisation to change and adapt to new and future challenges.</p> <p>Projects need to achieve at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities • improve the places and spaces that matter to communities • help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage <p>Projects focusing on heritage need to have a focus on strengthening the local community in some way.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to consider their environmental impact when designing their projects.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Funding between £300 to £10,000 is available. Groups can apply for up to £20,000 (two grants total) over a 12-month period.</p> <p>Eligible funding includes, but is not limited to equipment, one-off events, staff costs, training costs, transport, utilities or running costs, volunteer expenses, small land or building projects.</p>
Further Information	https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/awards-for-all-northern-ireland#section-1

Funding Organisation	National Lottery
Funding Programme	People and Communities
Programme Overview	<p>Funding is available for projects that work to make positive changes in their community – whether that's a community living in the same area, or people with similar interests or life experiences.</p> <p>Projects need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help people make changes to improve their lives • help communities build on their strengths and share things they've learned • seek to support change and adaption to new and future challenges <p>Applicants are encouraged to consider their environmental impact when designing their projects.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Funding between £10,001 to £500,000 is available.</p> <p>Eligible funding includes, but is not limited to equipment, staff salaries, training, overheads, evaluation, volunteer expenses and premises costs. Ineligible funding includes any activities or items you spend money on before a final decision is made, fundraising activities or second-hand vehicles.</p>
Further Information	https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/people-and-communities#section-1

Funding Organisation	National Lottery
Funding Programme	Grants for Heritage £3,000 - £10,000
Programme Overview	<p>Funding is open to projects that connect people and communities to the national, regional, and local heritage of the UK, funding activities to support a group taking on new responsibility for heritage, or to build new skills and capacity in organisations that already have responsibility for heritage.</p> <p>Eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are clearly focused on heritage – this can be national, regional, or local heritage of the UK • consider the COVID-19 pandemic and any potential risks or impacts this will have on project delivery • address the mandatory Inclusion outcome and any other priority outcomes as applicable • address the mandatory requirement on environmental sustainability • have a clear plan with a defined start, middle and end • have not already started and will last up to one year
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Funding between £10,000 to £250,000 is available. Application between £100,000 and £250,000 must have a 5% contribution of project costs from the applicant.</p> <p>Eligible funding activities includes supporting organisations who want to build capacity or achieve significant strategic change. This could include developing new skills or knowledge, exploring new models of governance, leadership, business, and income to improve the management of your heritage for the long term.</p> <p>Eligible costs include, but is not limited to equipment, paid training placements, staff costs, training costs, repair and conservation, digital outputs, volunteer expenses, small capital works. Ineligible funding includes existing staff costs, statutory or legal responsibilities.</p>
Further Information	https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-grants-heritage-10k-250k

Funding Organisation Architectural Heritage Fund	
Funding Programme	Project Viability Grant
Programme Overview	<p>The Architectural Heritage Fund helps communities find enterprising ways to revitalise the old buildings they love. Funds support charities and social enterprises in developing sustainable new uses for historic buildings that are redundant or under-used. They aim to both enable the conservation of historic buildings and to help groups own and manage historic buildings for the long-term.</p> <p>Project Viability Grants fund studies to look at potential uses for a building and at its current condition and produce a Viability Report to a standard template. Successful completion of this will be used to judge whether applicants can then apply for the AHF's Project Development Grant funding and can be used to secure further funding elsewhere.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	Up to £10,000 per project (average offer £3,500). 100% funding available through match funding welcomed.
Further Information	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-fund-research-and-revival-streams

Funding Organisation Architectural Heritage Fund	
Funding Programme	Project Development Grant
Programme Overview	<p>The Architectural Heritage Fund helps communities find enterprising ways to revitalise the old buildings they love. Funds support charities and social enterprises in developing sustainable new uses for historic buildings that are redundant or under-used. They aim to both enable the conservation of historic buildings and also to help groups own and manage historic buildings for the long-term.</p> <p>Project Development Grants are intended to assist an organisation to cover some of the costs of developing and co-ordinating a project and taking it towards the start of work on site. To qualify, an organisation must have established that the end use of the project is likely to be viable and have decided to take the project forward.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	Up to £20,000 per project (average offer £10,000). Evidence of 50% match funds expected.
Further Information	https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-fund-research-and-revival-streams

Funding Organisation	Aviva
Funding Programme	Aviva Community Fund
Programme Overview	<p>The Aviva Community Fund is designed to support charities and community groups make bigger impacts through testing innovative ideas and explore new sustainable strategies.</p> <p>Eligible projects include Climate Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting thriving communities by preventing, preparing for and protecting against the impacts of climate change <p>Fundraising can also cover usual operational costs.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	Aviva will match each donation you receive up to £250. Organisations can receive up to £50,000 in match funding and eligible causes can apply at any time.
Further Information	https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/

Funding Organisation	Aviva, in partnership with WWF and RSPB
Funding Programme	Save our Wild Isles Community Fund
Programme Overview	<p>The Save our Wild Isles Community Fund to make it easier for communities across the UK to act for nature in their local area. The Save our Wild Isles Community Funds supports projects that support one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature restoration – activity that boosts local biodiversity, by protecting or restoring habitats, creating space for nature, connecting green spaces and/or addressing activities that directly impact biodiversity. • Nature connectedness and pro-environmental behaviours – action that supports greater connection to nature and promote pro-environmental behaviours at the community-level that will benefit nature. • Community cohesion and connection – nature positive activity that encourages collaboration in the local community, connecting people of diverse backgrounds, generations, and abilities to nature and one another.
Programme Dates	Ends Upon Award of All Funding
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Accepted projects will receive 2:1 match funding from Aviva. Until £1 million of funding has been allocated, Pledges will be matched at a rate of £2 to every £1 donated. 2:1 match funding will apply to Pledges of up to £250. The maximum value of 2:1 match funding a Project can receive is £5,000.</p> <p>The maximum match funding you can receive is £5000. This means if you raise £2500 and receive another £5000 as match funding you will have £7500 overall to spend on your project. Projects interested in raising funds beyond the £7500 will be invited to continue fundraising through the Aviva Community Fund for a 1:1 matching scheme for up to a total of £50,000.</p> <p>Funds need to be raised via Crowdfunding. If using own funding, maximum individual donation that will receive the 2:1 match funding is £250. If an individual donation is higher than £250, your project will only receive £500 match funding on that donation</p>
Further Information	https://www.groundwork.org.uk/wild-isles/

Funding Organisation	Charles Hayward Foundation
Funding Programme	Small Grants Programme
Programme Overview	<p>The Charles Hayward Foundation wish to fund preventative and early intervention programmes being delivered at the community level which allow older people to stay in their own homes and remain independent. There is a specific interest in programmes which show some creativity in improving the quality of life of older people. Funded projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes aiming to alleviate isolation and depression in older people, including informal day care or social, physical and recreational activities. • Programmes which give practical help, assistance and support for older people living in their own homes. • Programmes addressing the emotional and practical needs of older carers. • Programmes designed to meet the specific needs of people with dementia <p>Ineligible funding includes minibus purchase, disability access, meal delivery services, older people's projects that are restricted to one section of society, community transport, community development organisations and buildings or equipment.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling – Applications considered every three months approximately (end of each quarter).
Funding Intervention Available	Grant of up to £7,000
Further Information	http://www.charleshaywardfoundation.org.uk/guidelines/

Funding Organisation	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
Funding Programme	Grants Programme
Programme Overview	<p>The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve our natural world, secure a fairer future and strengthen the bonds in communities in the UK. Through the provision of grants and social investment across the UK, the Foundation has awarded in £913.3 million in grants since 1961, with £36.2 million awarded in 2022.</p> <p>Proposed projects are funded following a thorough a six-stage submission process that seeks to take into account for differing factors, such as intended impact, costs and alignment with the Foundation's strategy, which has three aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Our Natural World • Tackling Injustice to Deliver A Fairer Future • Nurturing Creative, Confident Communities <p>Grants are provided on a long-term basis, usually over a 3–5-year period.</p>
Programme Dates	Rolling
Funding Intervention Available	<p>Minimum Grant Available - £30,000</p> <p>No Maximum Grant Available</p>
Further Information	https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/applications/guidance/#c-our-strategy

Closed Funding Sources

Funding Organisation	DAERA
Funding Programme	Environment Fund 2023 – 2028 – Strand 2 Strategic Strand (including Land Purchase and new projects leveraging significant match funding)
Programme Overview	<p>When sufficient budget may be available, In-year funding applications may be considered for high priority projects which could not have foreseeably applied to the Multi-Year Strategic Fund in 2023. This funding will be considered for projects which would lever significant match funding. This is those that meet the priorities which require a small element of match funding to lever funds from other bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> <p>If you propose applying for an Environment Fund In-year grant you MUST contact the Grant Team to discuss any possible application. If it is agreed that an application for in-year funding might be appropriate, the current electronic Application Form and Guidance Notes will be emailed to you for completion.</p>
Programme Dates	No Listed Dates
Funding Intervention Available	Level of funding intervention is currently unknown and to be confirmed subject to funding availability.
Further Information	https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/environment-fund-2023-2028#strand_2

Funding Organisation	Garfield Weston Foundation
Funding Programme	Grants & Pledges
Programme Overview	<p>Fund small local organisations and large national institutions. Grants range from £1,000 to several million pounds, depending on each charity's size and scope of work. Grants can be for your organisation's running costs, for a specific activity or for capital projects. The Foundation are flexible and fund what charities need the most.</p> <p>These are split across grants for capital projects, operating costs and projects or specific activity.</p>
Programme Dates	Currently closed to new applications
Funding Intervention Available	<p>No listed or defined funding value available.</p> <p>Last round (Feb 2023-April 2023) provided £50,599,381 across 568 grants.</p>
Further Information	https://garfieldweston.org/what-we-fund/

Funding Organisation	The Tudor Trust
Funding Programme	Annual Grants
Programme Overview	<p>The Tudor Trust is an independent charitable trust which supports work which tries to meet the many different needs of people at the margins of our society. The Tudor Trust is guided by six principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting communities to drive their own positive change. • Investing in relationships as the foundation of all we do – starting from a position of trust and demonstrating that we can be trusted. • Listening with intent: always trying to hear the real voice. • Valuing people's time: acting quickly where helpful and taking time where needed. • Using learning, our experience and creativity to offer flexible support to communities. • Making the most of our resources and independence and being open to challenge.
Programme Dates	Currently closed while restructuring.
Funding Intervention Available	Last round (March 2021 – April 2022) saw £19,303,450 awarded across 252 grants.
Further Information	https://tudortrust.org.uk/how-to-apply/open-data

Funding Organisation	Ford Britain Trust
Funding Programme	Large Grants
Programme Overview	<p>Applications are welcomed from non-profits helping our environment including wildlife trusts and environment protection organisations.</p> <p>Grants are available for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions to capital projects (e.g., refurbishments) • Capital expenditure items (e.g., furniture/equipment/computers) • Contribution towards the purchase of new vehicle (maximum grant £3,000*) <p>Eligible activities will be considered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work that has clear benefits to the local community/environment • Work with young people/children • Education/schools (mainstream) • Special education needs • People with disabilities <p>Ineligible activities include core funding, general running costs, major building works, sponsorship or advertising, research, overseas projects, travel, religious or political projects, purchase of second-hand vehicles.</p>
Programme Dates	Last Call Closed 31 st July 2023 – Yearly Call
Funding Intervention Available	Up to £3,000
Further Information	https://www.ford.co.uk/experience-ford/news/ford-britain-trust

Funding Organisation	Ulster Garden Villages Limited
Funding Programme	The Common Fund
Programme Overview	<p>Funding is primarily allocated to projects within Northern Ireland that will have a positive impact in Northern Ireland. The main objectives which funding is allocated towards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Disadvantaged sections of our society • Young people • Culture and heritage • Environment <p>The Common Fund will not support activities which are the responsibility of any statutory agency or replace statutory funding.</p>
Programme Dates	9 th August 2023
Funding Intervention Available	<p>No listed or defined funding value available.</p> <p>Funds are not given retrospectively and it is not usual for The Society to give grants for office expenses or administrative staff salaries.</p>
Further Information	https://ulstergardenvillages.co.uk/what-we-fund

Recommendations & Conclusion



Pic: Poppy & Bumblebee at Pollinator Patch,
Lock Keeper's Site

Recommendations & Conclusions

In conclusion, the comprehensive LVRP management plan outlined above serves as a strategic roadmap for the sustainable and effective management of the park. By focusing on environmental conservation, enhancement of visitor experience, and community engagement, LVRP can ensure the Regional Park's longevity as a valuable recreational and natural resource.

Through collaborative partnerships, annual and routine maintenance activities, and thoughtful planning, LVRP aims to strike a harmonious balance between preserving the Park's ecological integrity and providing enriching and educational experiences for all visitors. This management plan underscores LVRP staff's commitment to preserving the Park's unique character while fostering a sense of ownership and pride among the community, ensuring its enduring vitality for future generations.

As outlined in the Management Plan, to progress towards a greater financial sustainability, a multifaceted approach is recommended. Grants should be actively pursued to secure additional funding. PGG has identified supplementary funding possibilities that LVRP can avail of, as outlined, and examined in the 'Finance and Funding' section of this Management Plan. Furthermore, these opportunities have been linked to 'Shelf-Ready Projects' to ensure their effective and strategic execution.

Other ways in which LVRP can progress towards greater financial sustainability include exploring various income sources such as building on the successful delivery of events; guided walks, invited talks and tours that have provided a dependable low-level income for the Regional Park. Consideration should be given to how these could be developed into the tourism, corporate and similar sectors. Proven areas of expertise and delivery that can be considered for expansion include:

- Ecological knowledge and experiences, with expertise in species ID (Flora and Fauna), Habitat management and ecology.
- Biodiversity and people; how we interact with nature through food resources, folklore and customs, bushcraft, and foraging.
- Heritage and history associated with places such as Lock Keeper's Cottage, the Lagan Navigation, the Giants Ring etc and the gathered collective local history of Lagan Valley Regional Park.

There may be opportunities for liaison with local artists, theatre, and other wildlife expertise, that can build on existing partnership to develop new products such as workshops and interactive experiences. An additional method of income generation involves donations. LVRP may consider placing informational posters/signs at various areas around the park.

These posters can explain the valuable work being carried out within the park but also highlight the positive impacts and benefits of these efforts on wildlife and the environment. Alongside these educational elements, the posters could feature a QR code for facilitating donating so that visitors are able to contribute financially to the LVRP initiatives and conservation projects through donations.

LVRP's continued deployment of social media and the website to promote the Regional Park, and its events is essential, should these methods of income diversification be implemented. Leveraging digital platforms for engagement is also key to striking a balance between revenue generation and maintaining accessibility and inclusivity.

Whilst consultations highlighted that the capacity of the existing team is stretched and needs more resources, it is understood that volunteering cannot fill this shortfall. However, there is an appetite to consider introducing new volunteer roles that can support the team. The bank of volunteers that actively support LVRP is one of the Regional Park's major strengths and although no volunteer recruitment programmes have been active in recent years, there is still a waiting list for those seeking to become volunteers. Leveraging this strength is critical to support the strategic growth of the Regional Park. Through consultation several suggestions were offered for consideration for potential new volunteer roles that may assist and support LVRP's goals.

The commitment of the LVRP staff, combined with the support of stakeholders, volunteers, and the local community, will undoubtedly ensure the successful implementation of this management plan and the enduring vitality of LVRP for current and future generations.



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